

Chancellor delivers Budget 2020

The Chancellor has today (March 11) set out a £12 billion action plan in response to the economic impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, as part of a [Budget that delivers historic levels of public investment, levels up the country and lays the foundations for a decade of growth](#).

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said Britain will rise to the challenge of COVID-19, with a package of measures to support public services, individuals and businesses that may be affected by the outbreak.

In addition to responding to the immediate impact of COVID-19, the Chancellor pledged to put hardworking people first, put more money in their pocket, invest a record amount in infrastructure, boost public services, back business and set out a vision for a greener future.

A record half a trillion pounds (£640 billion) will be invested in Britain's roads, railways and digital networks to give us the infrastructure that will support economic growth.

The Budget also provides billions of pounds to support our world-class public services; with funding for 50,000 more nurses and 50 million more GP surgery appointments a year.

Millions of families will have more cash to spend thanks to tax cuts through an increase in National Insurance thresholds and a cash boost to the National Living Wage (NLW). The Budget also takes action to support businesses of all sizes and accelerates the UK's progress towards a greener economy. The Comprehensive Spending Review, which will set out the government's detailed spending plans for this Parliament, was also launched today and will conclude in July.

[Delivering the budget in Parliament](#) Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

This Budget responds, at scale, to the immediate threat of Coronavirus and it reports on an economy whose foundations are strong. It is a Budget that provides for security today.

He added:

This is a Budget that will deliver on our promises to the British people and it is the budget of a government that gets things done.

We're at the beginning of a new era in this country. We have the freedom and the resource to decide our own future.

COVID-19

The Chancellor pledged to do whatever it takes to support the economy through the disruption caused by [COVID-19 with a £12 billion package](#) of targeted measures. It included a £5 billion emergency response fund to support the NHS and other public services, £40 million of new funding for rapid research into COVID-19 and a commitment of up to £150 million to the International Monetary Fund's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust.

To support people affected, the Chancellor announced the government would be extending Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for all those who are advised to self-isolate and their carers – even if they haven't yet presented with symptoms. Statutory Sick Pay costs for businesses with fewer than 250 employees will be met by the government in full for up to 14 days.

Rishi Sunak also set out plans to support the self-employed, those earning below the Lower Earnings Limit of £118 per week and a new £500 million Hardship Fund to directly support vulnerable people. The government will also increase the Business Rates retail discount to 100% for one year and expand it to the leisure and hospitality sectors.

Public services

By the end of the Parliament, day to day spending on public services will be £100 billion higher in cash terms than it is today. This Budget commits more than £6 billion of new funding in this Parliament to support the NHS, including to create 50m more GP surgery appointments, ensure there are 50,000 more nurses. The NHS Settlement provided the largest cash increase in public services since the Second World War – an additional £33.9 billion per year by 2024.

Levelling up and getting Britain Building

Billions of investment will be provided across the length and breadth of the country to support communities poorly served by old roads, communications and housing:

- more than £27 billion will be spent on upgrading strategic roads and £2.5 billion will be spent on fixing potholes
- £5 billion will go towards the rollout of gigabit-capable broadband in the hardest to reach areas
- following the recent floods, which devastated parts of the UK, the Chancellor has pledged a record £5.2 billion over six years for flood defences

Cost of living

The Chancellor also put more money into the pockets of 31 million working people thanks to National Insurance Contribution thresholds increasing to £9,500, saving the typical employee around £104 a year from April, while the National Living Wage will increase to £8.72. This is on top a freeze in Fuel Duty, for the tenth consecutive year, and a freeze in duty rates for beer, cider and spirits, while the 'Tampon Tax' will be scrapped.

Backing Business

From April, small businesses will benefit from an increase to the Employment Allowance, reducing their employer National Insurance bills by £850 on average and there will be fundamental review of business rates.

Greener economy

To accelerate the UK's progress towards net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and protect the environment for future generations, the Chancellor announced £500 million for electric car charging infrastructure, to ensure drivers are never further than 30 miles away from a rapid charger. Tree planting in England will increase by 600% and to tackle the scourge of single-use plastics, a consultation will be launched on introducing a Plastic Packaging Tax.

Support for the regions and nations

The Chancellor has also pledged to level up all parts of the UK, with measures to spread opportunity and ensuring everyone benefits from growth. He announced the West Yorkshire Devolution Deal, which will help the region boom through the creation of a Mayoral Combined Authority, while a government economic decision-making hub will be created in the North of England.

As a result of the budget:

- the Scottish Government will benefit from a £640 million funding boost
- the Welsh Government a £360 million funding boost
- the Northern Ireland Executive a £210m funding boost

Further measures announced by the Chancellor can be found at this [factsheet](#).